

30 January 2025

To Members of the Norfolk Association of Local Councils

Dear Member and colleagues

Exciting times ahead!

Please allow me to introduce myself to those members that have not yet met or spoken to me: I am the new County Officer at Norfolk ALC and took up this post on 4th November 2024. I am an experienced manager and have served as an elected borough councillor and have also been a council officer. Those roles have given me a unique insight into the operational requirements of local councils. There are some commonalities as well as unique differences and circumstances for all. I have considerable experience across the public sector, private sector and the not for profit arena. I aim to use this experience to ensure that Norfolk ALC members receive a first class service from their county association.

In my first weeks in post, I have been reviewing our services and assessing if they might be streamlined or improved. I have had many conversations with some of our members and this has been helpful in understanding what works well and what could be simplified or perhaps done in a different way.

Some of the things I have observed:

- The website needs modernising, least of all a search feature.
- While our training offer is popular, booking onto courses has not been 100% effective every time. As a result, I have cancelled the clunky BookWhen system and members can now book directly with our training providers.
- Our payroll service is efficient generally, resulting in good client satisfaction feedback, except for one instance recently which was dealt with promptly once details were clarified. Realising it could be smarter; I would like to implement an improved payroll system and further enhance this service.
- We are recruiting a new finance officer who, in addition to the association's finance management role, will provide advice on accounting and managing our payroll services.
- Expert advice on VAT which is especially specific to councils, will be provided via Norfolk ALC
- Our HR service is provided by PD Solutions, headed by the very skilled and experienced Chris Moses to provide members with training and advice on matters relating to employment law and HR issues.
- We will have on board 4 qualified and experienced clerks who will provide a locum service to our members. I aim to build up a team of eight clerks and introduce this service in the next two weeks.

- I aim to address the shortage of qualified clerks across the county by implementing training of new clerks to CilCA standards.
- We plan to implement a new training provision for local councillors

These are just some of the changes and improvements to the service provision that I plan to implement. In addition to this, Norfolk ALC, as you know, will change its legal status from a co-operative society to a (not for profit) company limited by guarantee which will give us more flexibility to adapt and meet the changing needs of our members while still giving members, a voice in how the organisation develops. We will be restructuring the organisation to reflect these changes, building greater resilience within it.

Finally, I will just mention the English Devolution White Paper. This has potential implications for councils at all levels. The National Association of Local Councils has submitted evidence to the government and the White Paper includes many things that they have pressed for, including a strengthened standards regime, improvements to the audit regime, hybrid meetings, and a reset of relations between the tiers of government.

As a member of the Norfolk ALC, you can access resources provided nationally – by registering through the website. See: <https://www.nalc.gov.uk/about/membership.html>

Norfolk ALC is the link in the chain which enables information to flow both up and down, from local areas to the centre, informing policy, and cascading out to our members news and information we receive from the national body.

There are many reasons for continuing your membership of Norfolk ALC. I hope this letter explains to you some of our thoughts about the way forward as we change and continually seek to improve our services to you.

Yours sincerely

Adrian Myers

County Officer, Norfolk ALC

07904 043911

countyofficer@norfolkalc.gov.uk

